

Site Search:

[Extended Search](#)

Week of
January 12-18, 2006



home

news

op-ed

lifestyles

food

sports

police report

youth & schools

calendar

socials & obituaries

classifieds

real estate

place an ad

menu guide

medical guide

archives

contact us

m
i
s
s
e
d
y
o
u
r
p
a
p
e
r
?

review
2005 COMMUNITY
GUIDE

Greener pastures

Lincoln Financial Field proved a dream come true for most football fans at the Eagles' debut in the stadium. Traffic, however, was a bit of a nightmare.

By [Sheri Brenner](#)
August 28, 2003

By the third quarter of Friday night's preseason Eagles game, the score was New England, 24, Philadelphia, 3.



So why were so many Eagles fans smiling?

It seems the brand-new Lincoln Financial Field was one heck of a consolation prize. The \$512-million stadium, which hosted its first football game Friday, boasts a spectacular view, cushy seats in the club level, an array of sophisticated snacks and two giant video screens.

"It was just like a party when we walked in," said Tim Gunn, of the 2900 block of South Smedley Street. "Walking into the Vet is like walking into a sewer."

Harsh? Maybe, but Gunn and others sitting in Club Section C13 on Friday night are as familiar with local stadium accommodations as anyone. They all are constituents of the [Stadium Complex Special Services District](#), and acquired their tickets through the district, which represents the interests of stadium-area neighbors.

The bloc of South Philly fans weren't above gushing as they took in the Linc's many amenities.

"I think it's beautiful. I find myself watching that big-screen TV more than the game," said Rich Donnelly, of the 3000 block of South 17th Street.

The 27-by-96-foot flat TV screens -- which offer a far clearer picture than the Vet's Phanavision -- were a hit with everybody.

Donnelly's son, Jonathan, 13, noted the Linc "is really better than the Vet. The view is closer."

The one downside for the Donnellys was having to walk all the way to the main concourse for nachos.

George Hatton, an alternate director for the stadium district, was taken with the impressive vistas from virtually every point in the arena.

"The view is great, even from the end zone, it's great," he said. "The seating is nicer. It's more private."

Some fans had a hard time processing that this showplace stadium is, indeed, in Philadelphia.

"I was in Tampa Bay last year and it reminds me of that," Gunn said. "It reminds me more of a college stadium."

Reliant Stadium

**Purchase Tickets
Now! Preferred**

Seats Available

www.WebHost2020.com/t

For the record, the game ended with a 24-12 win for New England and a host of Eagles injuries. When fans were asked if playing at the Linc would make a difference for their beloved Birds, the consensus was, not really. Some even doubted the Eagles would win their conference.

And hey, if not, at least fans can mope in comfort.

Most in Section C13 live within reasonable walking distance of the Linc and were therefore spared the traffic adventures that preceded and followed the game.

"The police had their hands full," noted Shawn Jalosinski, executive director of the **Stadium Complex Special Services District**.

Jalosinski got an up-close view of the traffic flow -- or stoppage, in some cases -- as he walked around the stadium area from 4:30 p.m. to midnight with a city traffic engineer.

"We definitely saw more unique challenges," he said. "Unlike the concerts and the soccer match that were here, this was the first testing of the Eagles operation."

He called the process a "learning curve," which on Friday included Eagles ticket-holders with reserved spaces finding out where their spots were and how to get to them.

"What was not expected was the arrival times," Jalosinski said. "There were a lot of arrivals close to kickoff. Typically, there is a lot of tailgating [that helps stagger arrivals]."

The executive director believes the true barometer will be the Eagles' regular-season opener at the Linc on Sept. 8. On Friday, he noted, many people left during halftime.

Still, enough traffic funneled out at game's end to cause long lines and frayed nerves. As police directed cars away from the stadium-area neighborhoods, drivers battled with pedestrians for a few inches of road -- a struggle that more than once led to screeching brakes.

Jalosinski said plans to create crosswalks at 11th Street and other spots should help. He'll discuss that issue and others at a stadium district meeting with city officials and police before tonight's game against the New York Jets.

Jalosinski noted that the traffic landscape will continue to evolve over the next year as some Veterans Stadium parking spots are taken up by a resurfacing project and, of course, after the Vet is knocked down.

Some stadium neighbors at Friday's game weighed in on the fate of the doomed concrete arena, which will be imploded in February.

"It's a shame for the Vet," said Michael Locantora, of the 3200 block of South Broad Street -- who admitted he was more of a Phillies fan. "It's South Philly culture. Growing up, the Vet was always there. Now there is a new home to get used to."

Locantora, who was at the game with his son, Mike Jr., 7, added the Linc is "beautiful," but doesn't offer the same camaraderie as the Vet. "At the Vet, you can walk around and be a part of the crowd. Here, you go to your seat and that's it."

Kaitlyn Flynn, 11, who was at the game with her mom, Paula, appreciated the Linc's state-of-the-art design.

"I like it. It's all high-tech and stuff," said Kaitlyn, of the 1300 block of Geary Street. "I really like the Eagle vision [screens]."

But Mom's fond memories of the Vet somewhat tempered her enthusiasm for the Linc.

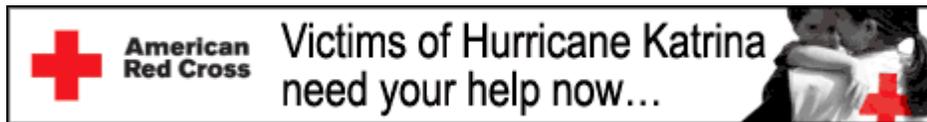
"It was built when I was in high school. I feel bad that they're knocking it down," said Paula Flynn. "The Vet's been like home. I guess it's time to get adjusted to the new place."

Jalosinski noted that the Linc is further from the neighbors, and Paula conceded that fact.

"When they scored a touchdown [at the Vet], I could hear it from my window," she said. "I'll miss that, though."

 [E-mail this article to a friend](#)

[back to top](#)



© 2006 [Review Publishing Privacy Policy](#)

visit our sister papers: [PW-Philadelphia Weekly](#), [Atlantic City Weekly](#), [Connections Weekly](#),